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PSYCHOLOGY.

The Burrowing Habits of Snakes.—In my snake enclosure I have kept a wooden box filled with loose cotton and crumpled paper, and having holes in its sides for the accommodation of the reptiles. Throughout the heated term the snakes spent a large part of their time in this box, but as the weather grew cooler they abandoned it and found new hiding places under their bath tub, or under loose boards, digging down as much as possible into the thin layer of earth which covered the floor of their enclosure. I then lined their box and covered it with cloth to make it warmer and they would occupy it in fine weather, but on stormy or frosty nights they would come out, crawl under it, and lie there torpid with cold.

It was evident that their instinct led them astray in this instance by prompting them to get as close to the ground as possible to avoid cold. One fine day when they were all in their box I took it out and put it down beside the garden walk, giving them their liberty that I might watch them seek their own winter quarters.

Some of the *Eutæniæ* burrowed beneath the mudsills of a shed and disappeared, while others found hiding places under the house and do not come out even on warm days. Of the water snakes, (*N. sipedon*), 7 in number, three have left me, but the others remain in the yard and have not yet found permanent homes for the winter. On fine days I see them darting about or basking in the sun beside a puddle which I have prepared for them. At night, or on cool days, they may be found coiled up under a water bucket or leaky rain barrel, but none of them re-enter their box. I have often been surprised at the amount of cold snakes of this species can endure.

One *Ophibolus getulus* searched about a little while and then crawled under an empty barrel beside the walk. A short time afterwards I tilted the barrel to see what he was doing and found that he was trying to make a burrow, but the ground was hard and it was slow work. Used to being watched he paid no attention to me but continued to scrape the ground with his rostral. When at length he had excavated a hole deep enough to hide his head he gave himself a rotary motion, turning half around then back again, boring the hole a little deeper and throwing out a little dirt with the projecting backs of his jaws. Sinking still deeper he would draw himself down, filling the hole tightly, and then drawing back a little would throw out fine dirt with

his scales and abdominal plates. At length he disappeared entirely, leaving a large handful of dry dirt on the surface and completely filling the burrow behind him with loose dirt. Another *O. getulus* burrowed out of sight in a garden bed, but the ground was loose and he did not throw back the dirt but seemed to press it aside, leaving his burrow open behind him.

I have seen the *Phyllophilophis æstivus* dig its burrows with its broad rostral, the *Heterodon platyrhinus* turn up the soil with its trihedral rostral with as much facility as a rooting pig, and have watched the *Carphophis amœna* working its way through loose ground like the earth worms on which it feeds, but the *O. getulus* digging in hard ground and throwing out the dirt behind it was an unexpected sight.—ANGUS GAINES.

Habits of *Heterodon platyrhinus* at Raleigh, N. C.—This snake which is quite common here, has a habit when interfered with of first flattening its head and body and violently hissing; more interference causes the snake to writhe about violently opening its jaws to the fullest extent, it then finally turns on its back and simulates death but still keeps its mouth wide open. After “dying” it becomes perfectly limp and may be carried in the hand a mile or more without showing signs of life, usually, however, still keeping the mouth open. One peculiarity alone shows life; if placed on the ground belly down, it at once turns on its back again nor can it be persuaded, however, “dead”, to lie on its belly.

This snake, although perfectly well-known to every one here, seems to be frequently confounded with the copperhead; only two months ago a colored boy came to us to find a remedy for snake bite as he had been bitten (as his badly swollen hand attested) by a “Spreading Add.”

Another snake also confounded with the Spreading Adder is *Natrix sipedon*, on account of the habit sometimes indulged in by the latter species, particularly by young specimens, of flattening the body in a manner similar to that of *Heterodon*.

The favorite food of *Heterodon platyrhinus* in this locality is the common toad, and they will sometimes take as many as three at a meal. If interfered with after a meal they frequently disgorge one or more toads. Personally I have never known them to eat anything else, but a friend who kept one for sometime said it would also eat young specimens of its own species.

The wholly black variety of this species is very rare here, so far I have only seen three specimens.—C. S. BRIMLEY.